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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 3 June 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. JASINSKI (Poland)

later: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (continued)

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1991/28, Parts I-III, DP/1991/30-35)

1. Mr. INOUE (Director, Population Division), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, said at its twenty-sixth session, held from 27 February to 8 March 1991, the Population Commission had considered the latest estimates by the Population Division. According to those estimates the world's population stood at 5.4 billion and was growing at an annual rate of 1.7 per cent. In spite of considerable efforts by Governments and the international community, the average annual population growth rate had remained nearly unchanged since 1975 and would most probably stay at that level for five more years. Recent research indicated that the world population might reach 10 billion by 2050.

2. The international community must increase its efforts to improve the health of all persons, particularly those in areas lacking a sufficient health infrastructure and a healthy environment. Average life expectancy at birth had reached 61 years in the less developed regions, but was significantly lower in some areas. Resources must be made available to ensure continued progress in reducing mortality and morbidity. The results of the work carried out by UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA in that regard must not be undermined by the AIDS pandemic.

3. Further efforts were needed to lower fertility levels in countries where fertility remained high. Contraceptive supplies should be made more readily available, and the status of women must be improved. Although fertility rates were declining at the global level, the annual number of births continued to rise because of the increasing number of women of child-bearing age. The Population Division estimated that the number of births during the period 1985-1990 had risen to 138 million annually, an increase of 14 per cent over the previous five-year period.

4. Although more than half of the countries of the less developed regions considered their fertility rate too high, contraceptive prevalence remained low. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, less than 6 per cent of married women of reproductive age used modern contraceptive methods. In Africa as a whole, the average prevalence of use of any contraceptive method was estimated to be only 16 per cent, as compared to 53 per cent in the less developed regions of Asia and 56 per cent in Latin America.

5. Approximately 45 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas. The less developed regions, in particular, were undergoing rapid urbanization, and many countries there were facing large rural population increases as well. International migration had become an important demographic issue, especially for countries with low rates of natural

increase. There had been a very sharp increase in the world refugee population in the late 1980s, to an estimated 14.5 million in 1989.

6. The Population Commission was an important forum for exchanging views and national experience in the area of population. The Commission's report stressed the relationship between population and development in carrying out the goals and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. At its twenty-sixth session the Commission, meeting as the Preparatory Committee for the international meeting on population in 1994, had recommended that the meeting should be called the "International Conference on Population and Development, 1994" and had recommended a draft resolution on the international meeting for consideration by the Economic and Social Council at its July session. The draft resolution set forth six objectives for the conference and identified issues of the highest priority for the coming decade. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs looked forward to working with UNFPA on preparatory activities, the organization of the international meeting and follow-up activities.

7. Mr. KELLAND (Denmark) stressed the need to help Governments implement population policies and mobilize the necessary resources. Funds spent on population policy and family planning would have a broader impact on development in general, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the reduction of population growth was a prerequisite for economic and social progress. Denmark noted with satisfaction that multilateral cooperation in the field of population policy seemed to be good, and welcomed the constructive relationship between UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). It was gratifying to see that the Fund had worked closely with WHO and UNICEF in reaching an agreement to pursue the formulation of more integrated national plans for maternal and child health and family planning activities. In that connection, he stressed the need to ensure wide access to a broad spectrum of contraceptive methods. Promoting the use of condoms was of special importance because it supported efforts to combat AIDS.

8. Steps should be taken to increase cooperation between the Fund and the World Bank, particularly in promoting the production of contraceptives in developing countries. Private-sector production of contraceptives would create the necessary supply and lead to increased demand. Since the Fund did not deal directly with the private sector, that task should be carried out by the International Finance Corporation (IFC). Nevertheless, UNFPA could provide IFC and recipient Governments with the required technical assistance.

9. Lower birth rates were a prerequisite for environmentally sustainable growth. If population pressures continued to increase, the world would face very serious poverty and environmental problems. Population issues, therefore, must be made a major agenda item at the Conference on Environment and Development. UNFPA would have a very significant role to play in that regard.

10. Mr. BASSIN (Finland) said that current demographic predictions clearly indicated that rapid population growth, unbalanced population distribution, migration, rapid urbanization and environmental problems would aggravate the already deteriorating situation in many countries. Eradicating poverty, balancing population growth and use of resources, and protecting the environment were key elements in ensuring quality of life and sustainable development.

11. Population questions must be given high priority at the important conferences to be held in the next few years, particularly the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development. Finland noted with satisfaction the linkage between population and environment, and supported UNFPA in its efforts concerning preparations for the Conference. The Fund was facing a number of challenges and needed increased international support. More resources were required in the 1990s. Finland, however, was somewhat concerned about the feasibility of the funding goals set by UNFPA for the year 2000. The economic situation in the major donor countries and the absorption capacity of some recipient countries had given rise to difficulties.

12. He noted with satisfaction the increased emphasis placed on Sub-Saharan Africa. Countries that had already registered significant decreases in fertility and maternal and child mortality and had increased family planning services could serve as good examples for other countries in the region. UNFPA should do even more in terms of policy support. The integration of population factors into all national development activities was important.

13. Actions directed at improving the status of women were central to all development efforts. Finland had strongly supported the strategy to strengthen the capacity of UNFPA to deal with issues concerning women, population and development. Cooperation with other United Nations agencies, especially UNICEF and UNIFEM, was necessary in that connection. His country supported the Executive Director's recommendations for future activities contained in document DP/1991/32.

14. His delegation would have appreciated more information on the Fund's coordination role with regard to population issues within the United Nations system and its cooperation with the other agencies. The Governing Council had encouraged the Fund, UNICEF, WHO and other relevant United Nations agencies to strengthen their cooperation in the field of maternal and child health and family planning. With regard for the proposed work plan for 1992-1995, the estimated annual increase in income of 10 per cent might seem high in view of the economic situation in the major donor countries. Nevertheless, assistance for population programmes called for substantial additional resources. Finland would remain a firm supporter of UNFPA during that period.

15. Mr. BISSEL (United States of America) stressed the need to expand family planning service delivery systems throughout the developing world. Priorities for action should include training of additional service delivery personnel, the development of new contraceptive technology, increased service delivery in both the public and private sectors, the strengthening of family planning management, improved family planning services, and better monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Meeting the family planning challenges of the 1990s would also require large increases in the volume of contraceptives supplied to users. Increased efforts were needed to promote local production of contraceptives. Marketing programmes should be strengthened in order to deliver contraceptives through the commercial sector.

16. The United States was committed to working with other donor Governments and non-governmental organizations to meet those important challenges. More effective coordination of population assistance activities was needed in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and make most effective use of resources. The formulation of regional and country strategies could be useful in that regard.

17. His delegation commended UNFPA on the increasing levels of population assistance allocated to Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, any effective strategy for that region must focus on the provision of high-quality family planning services. The Fund should attach even greater priority to that area. The efforts of UNFPA to strengthen its capacity to deal with issues concerning women, population and development were commendable. His country would welcome further collaboration between UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development in the provision of technical support, improved monitoring of women in development activities and the evaluation of such activities.

18. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development would provide an opportunity to assess progress made in the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and review strategies for the next century. His country was committed to doing its share to meet the formidable challenges of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, ultimate success would depend on increased efforts by all donors, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the developing countries themselves.

19. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the 1990s would be a time of both great opportunity and great challenges with regard to efforts in the field of population. It was widely recognized that excessive population growth rates were detrimental to sustainable development. In view of the enormous challenges facing the world, recipient countries should increase their efforts to mobilize resources, and should assign higher priority to population programmes in the framework of overall development planning. At the same time, the international community should enhance its assistance in that field. Japan welcomed the fact that certain countries had allocated substantial domestic resources for population programmes and commended, in particular, China, India, Indonesia and Zimbabwe in that regard.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

20. UNFPA played an important role as the lead agency in efforts to solve population problems. It was particularly gratifying to note that the Fund's programmes had expanded steadily over the past few years. Progress had been made in making more efficient use of resources, and more resources were being allocated to country activities. Japan stressed its particular support for the increase in resources allocated to the Sub-Saharan region; however, the Fund should also continue to increase allocations to Asian countries, where the greatest population growth was taking place. His delegation also welcomed the increase in government execution of Fund projects, both in absolute terms and as a share of total expenditures.

21. Japan generally supported the Fund's work plan for 1992-1995, but the projected growth of annual income, 10 per cent, might be optimistic in view of growing financial requirements in other fields, and of the acute needs stemming from the transformation in Central Europe and the aftermath of the Gulf war. The Fund was at a crossroads; for the past several years, it had focused mainly on programme delivery and on strengthening its infrastructure both at Headquarters and in the field. As a result, less attention had been paid to need for efficiency, rationalization, financial discipline, transparency, and accountability. That must change. The Fund should focus on achieving greater financial discipline in programme management and distribution of resources to programmes and more efficient use of financial and human resources. In so doing, it should pay serious attention to the recent substantial increase in the administrative and programme support services budget, which greatly exceeded the projected 6 per cent growth rate. His delegation had difficulty in accepting any post which ACABQ regarded as unjustifiable, and believed that field posts should also come under closer scrutiny by the Governing Council. It was also concerned at instances of over programming relative to the ceilings approved by the Governing Council at both work-plan and programme level. Lastly, clear and objective criteria such as those used to determine "priority countries" should be given greater weight in allocating resources. The criteria for project allocation established by the Council should also be re-examined so as to make them more objective and thereby enhance transparency.

22. The Fund was already moving in the right direction with the programme review and strategy development exercise, and similar positive steps should be taken in the areas he had referred to. Everyone would like to see an efficient, effective, and powerful Fund with sufficient means to have a substantial impact on population problems.

23. Mr. ZHANG Baohe (China) said that his delegation appreciated the Executive Director's incisive analysis of the current stark world population situation, which had caught the attention not only of the States members of the Council but of the entire international community. Indeed, some countries had incorporated the population issue into their national socio-economic plans or even made it one of their basic State policies. However, reality demanded that UNFPA should uphold the principle of the respect for the sovereignty of

(Mr. Zhang Baohe, China)

recipient countries even while providing more and more effective assistance to developing countries to help them resolve population problems. At the same time, the whole world community should join in support for UNFPA to help resolve the world-wide problem.

24. His Government attached great importance to the 1994 World Conference on Population and Development. The solution to the population question was closely bound up with other issues, which should be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. Only thus would a realistic international strategy be achieved.

25. In implementing country programmes, national execution should be a priority for UNFPA, as a means of making recipient countries progressively more self-reliant. However, the economic development, and particularly their social welfare development, was a difficult task for third world countries. Accordingly, national execution should be allowed to mature at its own speed, while UNFPA should provide the requisite technical back-up to the responsible government departments, which should receive help in training project management personnel and a certain minimum funding. UNFPA should prepare a guideline on national execution in time for the Governing Council session of 1992 or, at the latest, 1993.

26. The function of the specialized United Nations agencies, whose role, in partnership with the funding agency and the recipient countries had been most important, and which had accumulated much useful experience, should also not be neglected. His delegation hoped, however, that they would update their technical expertise and increase the quality and efficiency of their work.

27. UNFPA had stepped up its assistance in the area of women, population and development and had gained remarkable success. Without the full participation and cooperation of women, no population programme could be successful. In the third cycle UNFPA/China country programme, an integrated women-in-development project had been launched in China's poverty-stricken areas. Literacy programmes, production techniques and management skills training, maternal and child health care and family planning services would not only enhance the socio-economic development of those areas, but would improve women's economic status.

28. Mr. ZEIDENSTEIN (President of the Population Council) said that UNFPA's intercountry programme flowed from the conviction that certain activities of central importance could best be conducted at interregional and regional levels. UNFPA's interregional programme, for example, was vital for conducting comparative research in different countries, for instance on female-headed households and on the impact of family planning programmes on fertility. Through the intercountry programme, scarce resources were pooled and concentrated in support of country-level activities, including work in all of the substantive sectors included in UNFPA's mandate: maternal and child

(Mr. Zeidenstein)

health/family planning; information, education and communication; data collection and analysis; population research and policy development; and special programmes.

29. Much of that programme was currently executed by non-governmental organizations such as the Population Council whose specialized expertise and flexibility made them especially effective and attractive partners for UNFPA, and the Population Council believed that that mutually beneficial relationship should be continued and strengthened. The intercountry programme had had enormous impact on family planning programmes world wide: for example, without the interregional programme, the NORPLANT® system of contraceptive implants developed by the Population Council could not have achieved the levels of use it had in developing countries.

30. UNFPA had long recognized the importance of data collection and analysis to the formulation of population policies and to programme evaluation. During the succeeding programme period (1992-1995), the monitoring and analysis of country-level family planning programmes would be crucial and would be substantially enhanced by well-targeted inputs financed by the interregional programme. It would provide computerized information on 103 developing countries, with data so organized as to permit measurement and comparison of country-level family planning programmes, thus enabling local decision makers to improve those programmes.

31. UNFPA's publications showed the importance of intercountry funding for information dissemination. The Population Council too disseminated information world wide and, through its regular periodicals and other means, stimulated increasingly effective country-level population activities and gave access to the international community of policy-makers, researchers, scholars and programme managers.

32. UNFPA was according increasing prominence to women's issues, which had not received sufficient attention. Women remained the poorest of the poor; they were the greatest neglected human resource; their rights were few and their obligations many; in too many places, they were treated as instruments of the will of others. Simple justice required improvements in the roles and status of women; that was a principal theme of the Population Council's work, which had, in UNFPA's intercountry programme, a vital source of support. That notable undertaking established and sustained essential linkages between country-level efforts and the world community.

33. Mr. GIOVANNINI (Switzerland) said that "human development" was at last taking precedence over economic considerations. That change had come about as people had become aware of the serious damage caused to the environment in the name of growth, of their collective responsibility in the fight against poverty, of the seriousness of population problems and of the importance of the advancement of women, among other issues. UNFPA had helped to create that awareness.

(Mr. Giovannini, Switzerland)

34. Though qualitative rather than quantitative improvement was now being focused on, UNFPA still needed certain numerical goals or indicators of the impact of its activities. For instance, more people must be induced to use family planning techniques, although statistics on that subject were at best a secondary indication of the success of family planning campaigns, mortality and fertility rates being much more revealing.

35. In connection with contraceptive use, cultural considerations came into play. A woman whose status in society was low or depended on how many children she had was in no position to have a real dialogue with her husband or to get her own way. The importance of adapting messages to the social-cultural context, improving services and raising the status of women, particularly by educating girls, could not be overemphasized. Women's age at marriage must also be increased, since it affected their status, their health, their children's health and the number of pregnancies they would have. The report on the implementation of UNFPA's strategy on women, population and development described encouraging progress in those areas, and his delegation hoped that it would continue.

36. To be effective, UNFPA must improve its operational capacity. The Fund's operational capacity should be increased so that projects entrusted to executing agencies could receive the necessary follow-up. Such strengthening of field offices should in future be carried out on the basis of medium-term and long-term staffing plans. While the institution of technical support teams was an appropriate means of strengthening national capacities, his delegation had some doubts as to its cost and the way in whcih the exercise was being conducted.

37. While the quality of the reports before the Council was commendable, attention should be given in future to defining more clearly the specific role and function of UNFPA in relation to its partners, and particularly the World Bank. His delegation hoped that, in view of the probable development of needs and resources with respect to population, the Executive Director would submit to the Council next year a paper on the future evolution of UNFPA's role.

38. It was possible that resources would not grow as quickly as was hoped, since the projections were based on contributions in recent years and were skewed by the happy accident that exchange rates had been favourable to UNFPA, which should therefore be prudent in its financial planning. Switzerland, however, had wished to show its confidence in UNFPA by making an above-average increase in the amount of its voluntary contribution.

39. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that the major question was how to address in operational terms the tasks identified by UNFPA, a question which could be resolved into the two elements of resources and management. The Amsterdam Declaration called for a doubling of financial resources for population programmes by the year 2000, and Canada, for its part, intended to give high

(Mr. Soutter, Canada)

priority to population funding. Although funding problems would remain, the most critical constraint was the ability to manage population activities effectively and efficiently.

40. The report entitled The state of world population 1991 demonstrated UNFPA's ability to communicate. He welcomed the emphasis placed by the Fund on family planning information, although the relationship between family planning and structural adjustment could have been further developed. His delegation trusted that the ramifications of structural adjustment activities would be considered in the preparation of programme review and strategy development reports and country programmes.

41. His Government regretted the difficulties attending the issue of support costs within the United Nations system, and understood the pressures on UNFPA. It must be remembered, however, that the primary objective was to deliver population programmes in developing countries while building national capacity for sustainability. Optimum management and access to all available resources were essential.

42. The report on the implementation of the strategy for UNFPA assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa (DP/1991/33) indicated that most specialized agencies had only a fair to poor rating as executing agencies for UNFPA projects, a conclusion confirmed by other studies. It was therefore of concern that UNFPA was proposing to continue to rely on those same specialized agencies for implementation. Perhaps other options, such as recruitment of its own staff or reliance on regional and national institutions and the private sector, should be considered. The preparation of specific guidelines for programme execution would be useful. The current ambiguity regarding reporting and responsibility were of particular concern to his delegation. Canada would shortly begin an evaluation of UNFPA activities, in which the issue of project and programme management would be a major element.

43. His delegation welcomed UNFPA's commitment to Africa and noted the many positive changes which were attributable to the Fund's endeavours. More detailed analysis of difficulties and failures than provided in the report on UNFPA assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa, and more information on the impact of financial constraints on the regional and national institutions referred to in paragraph 19 of the report, would be useful. Equally, the report did not cover the question of international migration, which was an important phenomenon in many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

44. Closer monitoring was needed of activities on the role and status of women. Consideration should be given to more comprehensive training programmes in respect of women, population and development programming, the development of a comprehensive reporting mechanism to ensure effective monitoring, improved technical assistance, and the strengthening of links with local non-governmental organizations. He supported the Fund's efforts to link women with population and development issues. Lastly, his delegation was

(Mr. Soutter, Canada)

confident that UNFPA, with appropriate attention to programme implementation and management, could meet the challenge of the 1990s, continuing the success it had achieved in the 1980s.

45. Mr. FONDI (Italy) said that fertility rates were, for the first time, falling in all regions of the world, but at a pace slower than previously estimated, so that global population was still increasing, with devastating consequences. Population issues were at the centre of development, and were one of the crucial elements in improving the quality of life throughout the world. Excessive population increases, especially in the developing countries, constituted a serious obstacle to improvements in economic and social welfare. Population pressures also played an important role in environmental degradation and resource depletion. As noted by the Executive Director, there was an urgent need to strike a better balance between population, resources, environment and development, to which end a more integrated policy of development aid should be implemented.

46. UNFPA, through its projects on the linkage between population and the environment, was making an invaluable contribution in that regard. In addition, his delegation welcomed UNFPA efforts to promote the participation of women in all matters relating to population activities. It was particularly important to improve coordination between the Fund and other United Nations organizations as well as non-governmental organizations involved in the population field.

47. With regard to successor arrangements for agency support costs, he wished to know whether UNFPA was contemplating a mechanism which would provide for remuneration for technical assistance services provided directly for project execution by specialized agencies and the United Nations. Such an approach might provide a way out of the impasse in the negotiations being conducted with the United Nations.

48. Miss LISSIDINI (Uruguay) said that the continuing growth in world population, which was forecast to reach more than 8.5 billion by the year 2025, compelled the international community to contemplate the consequences of such an increase in terms of food resources, housing, education and environmental impact. It was imperative to attain a reasonable balance between population, development and the environment. While there was now greater awareness of the difficulties posed by unrestrained population growth, little attention had been paid to the development problems of those countries with low or zero rates of growth, such as Uruguay.

49. Her delegation supported the Fund's measures to promote family planning, a key element in various international development and population initiatives. UNFPA's work in providing information and in education would continue to be a priority, since only through greater awareness could there be any hope of stabilizing world population.

(Miss Lissidini, Uruguay)

50. It was sadly apparent that legal equality between men and women had so far failed to result in real equality. In terms of education, women suffered from discrimination, and in some cases outright denial of educational opportunities, with a consequential direct impact on family planning. Her delegation fully supported the Fund's endeavours to integrate women into its programmes, specifically with regard to population and development. She welcomed the establishment of a 50 per cent staffing ratio for women within UNFPA, on the understanding that the criteria of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity were respected.

51. With regard to special programmes, activities to assist the young and elderly should be further promoted, while environmental concerns were of overriding importance. There was an obvious link between population growth and environmental deterioration, as exemplified by the explosive growth of major cities with serious environmental consequences. Her delegation looked forward to the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and welcomed the effective coordination between UNFPA and other United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations.

52. The increase in the Fund's resources in 1990 was gratifying. Uruguay, despite its economic difficulties, had increased its own contribution. It seemed, however, that insufficient funds might be available to finance UNFPA activities in 1991, in view of which she urged all donors to provide greater support.

53. The economic crisis which continued to affect Latin America and the Caribbean had repercussions in the population domain, and her delegation encouraged the Fund to continue its programmes in the region, particularly in respect of the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), which provided a number of technical services with regard to population matters as well as support for regional projects. In that connection, the proposed reduction of the role of the economic commissions to research and teaching gave cause for concern. It was important for ECLAC and CELADE to have the necessary human and financial resources to continue their population activities, if the assertion that there was an important link between population and development was to have any real meaning.

54. While Uruguay's situation was atypical, account should be taken of the problems posed by the emigration of thousands of its young people, the prime movers in development, particularly in terms of the difficulty of attaining economic development with an ageing population. Lastly, her delegation supported the convening of the future United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

55. Mrs. KEPENS (Belgium) said that lasting development was possible only if account was taken of demographic variables. Population growth could erode the benefits of economic growth and have a negative impact on the environment. The complex relationship between the environment and population was worthy of

(Mrs. Kepens, Belgium)

particular attention during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

56. Education and the health of mothers and children benefited from population activities, and in that connection her delegation welcomed UNFPA's efforts in the field of women and development. Real progress had been achieved.

57. UNFPA's task was of importance to the population of the whole world. Her Government supported the Fund's concentration on family planning, since that had the greatest impact on development. The serious situation in sub-Saharan Africa justified focusing activities in that region. It was important to stress community participation when implementing projects, since the cooperation of local leaders was essential if, for example, information products were to reach their targets. Men, and not just women, must be included in such programmes.

58. Education was also of importance. Acceptance of family planning increased with the level of education, given which it was particularly unfortunate that young women were still excluded from education. UNFPA activities in that area were thus highly appropriate. Her delegation welcomed UNFPA's involvement in contraceptive programmes and AIDS-related activities, although the latter should be more integrated into the general framework of sexually transmitted diseases. With regard to evaluation, her delegation commended the frankness with which UNFPA had assessed the difficulties it faced and its own shortcomings. Such recognition was the first step in finding solutions.

59. She welcomed the Fund's involvement in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in the expectation that there would be a cross-fertilization between scientific research and operational activities, and greater cooperation between all States in the population field. While political leaders in all countries were responsible for reflecting demographic considerations in their economic and social policies, the international community must assist those countries which lacked the necessary resources. Belgium was willing to assume its share of that responsibility by maintaining its support for UNFPA.

60. Mr. ÖSTRÖM (Sweden) said his country welcomed the renewed international interest in population issues and wished to stress their relation to development in general and poverty alleviation in particular. The Swedish parliament had urged the Government to pay increased attention to population issues in the country's development cooperation. The Swedish contribution to UNFPA would therefore increase to about $22 million in fiscal year 1991-1992.

61. Sweden appreciated the fact that the State of the World Population report pointed out the need for greater responsibility by men with regard to reproductive health and fertility, and trusted that would be reflected in the programmes supported.

(Mr. Öström, Sweden)

62. His delegation particularly welcomed two recent initiatives. The first was the joint letter to the staff of WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA on maternal and child health in family planning, signed by the heads of those organizations, with the purpose of joining forces for better support to country programmes. The second initiative concerned UNFPA's efforts to prevent population programmes from being jeopardized by a lack of contraceptives and to establish a mechanism for assisting Governments in timely provision of supplies.

63. The situation in Africa, with the highest population growth in history, demanded special attention by the Fund. The special focus on Africa should be reflected in increased assistance from UNFPA and other sources.

64. Mr. URBINA (Mexico) said that the relationships among demographic pressure, patterns of unsustainable consumption and environmental degradation were of crucial importance for Mexico, since those issues were among its greatest concerns, as had been demonstrated by the special attention President Carlos Salinas de Gortari had paid to the country's demographic and ecological problems. For the first time in Mexican history, the 1989-1994 national population plan was a part of the national development plan. That full recognition of the relationship between population variables and the country's economic and social development had been confirmed with specific budget lines for each institution represented in the National Population Council. As of 1991, there were population programmes for each of the 32 states in the country.

65. Mexico particularly welcomed UNFPA's intention to support the consolidation and synthesis of progress made in population policies and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, and was interested in hosting the Latin American Conference on Population and Development in 1993 in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994. At the regional Conference, trends, causes and consequences of the region's demographic change would be analysed; new demographic scenarios and emerging challenges would be defined; the collective experience of the region in the areas of planning, evaluation and decentralization strategies would be shared and knowledge of progress made would be updated.

66. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) said that a better balance was needed among population, available resources and development in order to create the conditions necessary for sustainable development. Germany concurred with the analysis presented in the World Population report that an increase in international technical assistance to population programmes was an indispensable requirement for meeting the goal of balancing population, natural resources and social and economic possibilities, and would increase its contribution to the Fund in 1991. He wondered, however, whether resource mobilization should be the top priority; more important, perhaps, was increasing the efficiency of population programmes, including improving the structure of developing institutions that wished to bring about change. Only

(Mr. Sahlmann, Germany)

if UNFPA concentrated on the highest-impact programmes would resources be made available. Only if it implemented major parts of the recommendations of the senior management structure (DP/1991/50) could it expect volunteer support in implementing its strategies. It must train and support those volunteers.

67. The 1990 revision of the United Nations medium variant projections gave cause for concern, since the fastest growth was taking place in the poorest countries. If that growth continued, not all newborns in those countries could be expected to have access to education, health care and an adequate job. Germany underlined the importance of the status of women in society for successful population programmes.

68. His country commended the first steps taken by UNFPA to direct international coordination of population activities and take action on joint programmes with other agencies. Germany also looked forward to a joint review of collaboration between UNFPA and UNICEF. There was, none the less, much room for further substantive improvement. Efforts by UNFPA and the United Nations Volunteers could give programmes a wider impact.

69. Ms. HASSAN (Observer for Egypt) said that her country was preparing for a country programme to start in 1992, and at the intercountry level was awaiting enhanced cooperation with UNFPA in relation to the Cairo Demographic Center, which for years had been under the coordination of UNFPA and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development. At the international level, in 1991 Egypt had participated in the preparatory process for the 1994 Conference on Population and Development and would continue to collaborate in all respects. Egypt had established a special unit to coordinate population questions and issues related to the Conference, which it had offered to host.

70. Population issues had taken on a new shape in recent years. Development was not confined to developing countries. The United Nations was the ideal forum to respond to the urgent needs of developing countries, and in that regard Egypt was ready to provide whatever cooperation it could.

71. Mr. MORALES CARBALLO (Cuba) said that the progress achieved by UNFPA reached all developing regions. His country supported all the country programmes before the UNDP Governing Council, especially those for Latin American countries.

72. Cuba shared the concern of Uruguay with regard to CELADE, and believed that the work of UNFPA, which was important for all countries, should be more generously funded so as to enable it to achieve its objectives.

73. Mr. VAN ARENDONK (Deputy Executive Director, Programme, United Nations Population Fund), introducing document DP/1991/35, said that the Fund was still in the process of dialogue with the United Nations regarding the proposed UNFPA successor arrangements for agency support costs. From the Fund's inception in 1969 until 1981, UNFPA had not paid overheads to the

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United Nations and its specialized agencies; rather, it had provided support through the establishment of regional adviser and agency headquarters technical officer posts. From January 1982 until the present, UNFPA had paid overheads at the rate of 13 per cent of actual project expenditures. The present system implied that the Fund paid for technical support twice - through the technical advisory posts in the intercountry programme, and through the 13 per cent overhead.

74. In essence, the UNFPA proposal on successor arrangements for agency support costs, which would cover the period from January 1992 on, replaced the 13 per cent overhead paid to the United Nations executing agencies as well as the component for regional and headquarters technical advisers. Chief among the problems which had been identified in past assessments of UNFPA operational activities that were in some way related to the provision of technical support services to developing countries within their population programmes was the insufficient number of technical advisers available for country programmes and projects, with consequent shortcomings in the quality and timing of services. There had been no formal mechanisms for substantive intersectoral linkages, and hence inputs had tended to be fragmented. Over the years, the role and functions of the agencies had been diluted, and had gradually shifted to project execution and managerial and administrative work, rather than technical back-stopping.

75. Another major problem was the lack of coordination of activities. In the area of population information, education and communication, the responsibilities of executing agencies had sometimes overlapped. The slow progress in integrating population issues into the agencies' mandates and regular work programmes had isolated population concerns within the agencies and led to a lack of full and timely technical support for country population programmes. Moreover, very little feedback on research undertaken by the agencies had been provided for use in such programmes.

76. In line with General Assembly resolution 44/211, calling for the adoption of national execution as the modality of United Nations operational activities, UNFPA would continue its efforts to identify and develop national expertise and promote greater use of national experts and institutions. At the regional and subregional levels, the Fund was proposing the establishment of country programme technical support teams, which would provide countries with a broad range of technical support services at various stages of the programming cycle, assist them in developing strategies for country population programmes and help them execute country projects on their own.

77. The function of the teams would be technical rather than managerial, and they would be backstopped by a small number of technical specialists and coordinators whose principal role would include the provision of state-of-the-art information, research and referral services on population. They would also play an advocacy role in the integration and incorporation of population within the mandate of the respective agencies.

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78. The cost of the proposed successor arrangements for agency support costs was estimated at $123 million over the period 1992-1995. That included the costs of technical support services ($89.4 million), and of the indirect administrative and operational services necessary to run the teams and the headquarters components of the new system ($33.6 million). That cost would be offset by the reduction of the current 13 per cent overhead payments to the agencies for advisory services to approximately 6 per cent. The new arrangement would include a total of 164 technical experts: 120 on the country programme technical support teams, 8 at agency regional offices and 36 at agency headquarters. The composition of the country programme technical support teams would be kept flexible to adjust to changing needs of countries.

79. UNFPA would reimburse 50 per cent of the administrative and operational costs to the agencies in support to the execution of country projects. The Fund would not pay for full operational costs, as it was already providing specialists at the agency headquarters level. Overheads for projects to be executed by non-governmental organizations would be paid as direct and indirect costs identified in the respective project budgets.

80. The team approach proposed by UNFPA would be evaluated after its third year of operation. In order to monitor implementation of the proposed technical support services under the new successor arrangements, an inter-agency task force on technical support services had been established, under the chairmanship of the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Programme. Its primary purposes were to monitor the performance of the new arrangements and to provide advice and ensure the harmonization and complementarity of tasks performed by the technical support services staff.

81. The implementation of the UNFPA proposal would result in much wider coverage of technical support services, all aimed at enhancing national capability and facilitating national execution. The provision of additional technical expertise from the United Nations system and from regional and non-governmental organizations under the proposed arrangements was part of the Fund's plan to promote national execution. The technical assistance component was a major element of the UNFPA proposal.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.